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## In Mideast, Biden struggling to shift policy after Trump



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President Joe Biden speaks in the Roosevelt Room of the White House, Friday, July 8, 2022, in Washington.

Associated Press



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## Trump ally Bannon now willing to testify before Jan. 6 panel

By HOPE YEN and FARNOUSH AMIRI  
Associated Press

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — Steve Bannon, a former White House strategist and ally of Donald Trump who faces criminal charges after months of defying a congressional subpoena over the Capitol riot, has told the House committee investigating the attack that he is now willing to testify. Bannon's turnaround was conveyed in a letter late Saturday from his attorney, lawmakers said, as the committee prepares to air some of its most striking revelations yet this week against Trump in what may be its final set of hearings. "I expect that we will be hearing from him and there are many questions that



Former White House strategist Steve Bannon speaks with reporters after departing federal court on Nov. 15, 2021, in Washington.

Associated Press

we have for him," said Rep. Zoe Lofgren, D-Calif. She and other committee members said in television interviews Sunday they intend to have Bannon sit for a private interview, which they typically conduct in a

deposition with sworn testimony. Bannon had been one of the highest-profile Trump-allied holdouts in refusing to testify before the committee, leading to two criminal counts of contempt of Congress last

year for resisting the committee's subpoena. He has argued that his testimony is protected by Trump's claim of executive privilege. The committee contends such a claim is dubious because Trump had fired Bannon from the White House in 2017 and Bannon was thus a private citizen when he was consulting with the then-president in the run-up to the riot on Jan. 6, 2021. Still, in recent days, as the former president grew frustrated with what he decried as a one-sided presentation by the committee of seven Democrats and two Republicans, Trump said he would waive that privilege claim, according to a letter Saturday to Bannon's lawyer. "If you reach an agreement on a time and place for your testimony, I will waive executive privilege for you, which allows for you to go in and testify truthfully and fairly, as per the request of the unselect committee of political thugs and hacks," Trump wrote.

The committee's Thursday evening hearing will examine the three-hour plus stretch when Trump failed to act as a mob of supporters stormed the Capitol. It will be the first hearing in prime time since the June 9 debut that was viewed by 20 million people.

A hearing Tuesday will focus on the plotting and planning of the insurrection by white nationalist groups such as the Proud Boys, the Oath Keepers and the Three Percenters, and will also highlight testimony taken Friday from former White House counsel Pat Cipollone.

It comes after surprise testimony last month from former Trump White House aide Cassidy Hutchinson provided the most compelling evidence yet that Trump could be linked to a federal crime. Since then, the committee has seen an influx of new information and confidential tips.

Rep. Jamie Raskin, D-Md., suggested that Bannon "had a change of heart, and after watching, presumably, all of these peo-

ple come forward, including Cassidy Hutchinson, he's decided that he wants to come in, and if he wants to come in, I'm certain that the committee would be very interested in hearing from him."

Bannon's trial on the two criminal counts is July 18. A hearing in his case was scheduled for Monday in federal court in Washington. Bannon has been seeking a delay in his trial to at least fall.

It's unclear how much Bannon intends to cooperate. He has expressed a preference to appear before the committee in a public hearing. The committee is making clear he must first sit for a private interview, typically in a sworn deposition. It's also possible he may opt to appear and then refuse to answer questions, citing his Fifth Amendment right against self-incrimination.

"The way that we have treated every single witness is the same, that they come in, they talk to the committee there," Raskin said. "If they're going to take a deposition, they're sworn under oath. It's videotaped. It's recorded, and then we take it from there."

The committee says it wants to hear from Bannon because he "had specific knowledge about the events planned for Jan. 6 before they occurred." It cited as an example comments that he made on his podcast the day before the riot.

"It's not going to happen like you think it's going to happen. OK, it's going to be quite extraordinarily different. All I can say is strap in," Bannon said in that podcast. "All hell is going to break loose tomorrow. ... So many people said, 'Man, if I was in a revolution, I would be in Washington.' Well, this is your time in history." House investigators have been digging deeper into the evidence collected so far about the role extremist groups played in the deadly insurrection and what Trump was doing as the violence ensued down the street from the White House. □

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## In Mideast, Biden struggling to shift policy after Trump

By AAMER MADHANI and DARLENE SUPERVILLE

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Joe Biden took office looking to reshape U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East, putting a premium on promoting democracy and human rights. In reality, he has struggled on several fronts to meaningfully separate his approach from former President Donald Trump's.

Biden's visit to the region this week includes a meeting with Saudi Arabia's King Salman and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the oil-rich kingdom's de facto leader who U.S. intelligence officials determined approved the 2018 killing of U.S.-based journalist Jamal Khashoggi in Turkey.

Biden had pledged as a candidate to recalibrate the U.S. relationship with Saudi Arabia, which he described as a "pariah" nation after Trump's more accommodating stand, overlooking the kingdom's human rights record and stepping up military sales to Riyadh. But Biden now seems to be making the calculation that there's more to be gained from courting the country than isolating it.

Biden's first stop on his visit to the Mideast will be Israel. Here, again, his stance has softened since the firm declarations he made when running for president. As a candidate, Biden condemned Trump administration policy on Israeli settlements in the West Bank. As president, he's been unable to pressure the Israelis to halt the building of Jewish settlements and has offered no new initiatives to restart long-stalled peace talks between Israel and the Palestinians.

The Biden administration "has had this rather confusing policy of continuity on many issues from Trump — the path of least resistance on many different issues, including Jerusalem, the Golan, Western Sahara, and most other affairs," says Natan Sachs, director of the Center for Middle East Policy at the Brookings Institution. Now Biden appears to be trying to

find greater equilibrium in his Mideast policy, putting focus on what's possible in a complicated part of the world at a time when Israel and some Arab nations are showing greater willingness to work together to isolate Iran — their common enemy — and to consider economic cooperation.

"Biden is coming in, in essence making a choice," Sachs said. "And the choice is to embrace the emerging regional architecture." Biden on Saturday used an op-ed in the Washington Post — the same pages where Khashoggi penned much of his criticism of Saudi rule before his death — to declare that the Middle East has become more "stable and secure" in his nearly 18 months in office and he pushed back against the notion that his visit to Saudi Arabia amounted to backsliding. "In Saudi Arabia, we reversed the blank-check policy we inherited," Biden wrote. He also acknowledged "there are many who disagree" with his decision to visit the kingdom. He pointed to his administration's efforts to push a Saudi-led coalition and Houthis to agree to a U.N.-brokered cease-fire — now in its fourth month — after seven years of a war that has left 150,000 people dead in Yemen. Biden also cited as achievements his administration's role in helping arrange a truce in last year's 11-day Israel-Gaza war, the diminished capacity of the Islamic State terrorist group in the region and ending the U.S. combat mission in Iraq.

But Biden's overall Mideast record is far more complicated. He has largely steered away from confronting some of the region's most vexing problems, including some that he faulted Trump for exacerbating.

Biden often talks about the importance of relationships in foreign policy. His decision to visit the Mideast for a trip that promises little in the way of tangible accomplishments suggests he's trying to invest in the region for the longer term.

In public, he has talked of insights gained from long hours over the years spent with China's Xi Jinping and sizing up Russia's Vladimir Putin. He's relished building bonds with a younger generation of world leaders including Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Japan's Fumio Kishida.

Biden has met every Israeli prime minister dating back to Golda Meir, has a long-standing relationship with Jordan's King Abdullah II and was deeply involved as vice president in helping President Barack Obama wind down the Iraq War. But Biden, who came of age on the foreign policy scene during the Cold War and sees the rise of China as the most pressing crisis facing the West, has been less oriented toward the Middle East than Europe and Asia.

"He doesn't have the personal relationships. He doesn't have the duration of relationships," said Jon Alterman, director of the Middle East Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.



Saudi special forces salute in front of a screen displaying images of Saudi King Salman, right, and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman after a military parade in preparation for the annual Hajj pilgrimage, in the Muslim holy city of Mecca, Saudi Arabia, July 3, 2022.

Associated Press

He arrives at an uncertain moment for Israeli leadership. Former Prime Minister Naftali Bennett and Yair Lapid last month dissolved the Knesset as their politically diverse coalition crumbled. Lapid, the former foreign minister, is now the caretaker prime minister. Biden also will face fresh questions about his commitment to human rights following the fatal shooting of Palestinian American journalist Shireen Abu

Akleh. Independent investigations determined that she was likely shot by an Israeli soldier while reporting from the West Bank in May. The Abu Akleh family, in a scathing letter to Biden, accused his administration of excusing the Israelis for the journalist's death. The State Department last week said U.S. security officials determined that Israeli gunfire likely killed her but "found no reason to believe that this was intentional." □

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## Yosemite fire grows as crews protect iconic sequoias

**YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK, Calif. (AP)** — A wildfire threatening the largest grove of giant sequoias in Yosemite National Park more than doubled in size in a day, and firefighters were working in difficult terrain Sunday to protect the iconic trees and a small mountain town.

Campers and residents near the blaze were evacuated but the rest of the sprawling park in California remained open, though heavy smoke obscured scenic vistas and created unhealthy air quality.

"Today it's actually the smokiest that we've seen," Nancy Phillippe, a Yosemite fire information spokesperson, said Sunday.

"Up until this morning, the park has not been in that unhealthy category, but that is where we are now." More than 500 mature sequoias were threatened in the famed Mariposa Grove but there were no reports of severe damage to any named trees, including the 3,000-year-old Grizzly Giant. A sprinkler system set up within the grove kept the tree trunks moist and officials were hopeful that the steady spray of water along with previous prescribed burns would be enough to keep flames at bay, Phillippe said.

The cause of the Washburn Fire was under investigation. It had grown to nearly 2.5 square miles (6.7 square kilometers) by Sunday morning, with no containment. Beyond the trees, the community of Wawona, which is surrounded by parkland, was under threat, with people ordered to leave late Friday.



The Washburn Fire burns in Mariposa Grove in Yosemite National Park, Calif., on Friday, July 8, 2022.

Associated Press

In addition to residents, about 600 to 700 campers who were staying at the Wawona campground in tents, cabins and a historic hotel were ordered to leave. Temperatures were expected to rise and reach the lower 90s in the coming days, but fire crews working in steep terrain were not contending with intense winds, said Jeffrey Barlow, senior meteorologist with the National Weather Ser-

vice in Hanford. The giant sequoias, native in only about 70 groves spread along the western slope of California's Sierra Nevada range, were once considered impervious to flames but have become increasingly vulnerable as wildfires fueled by a build-up of undergrowth from a century of fire suppression and drought exacerbated by climate change have become more intense and destructive.

Phillipe, the park spokesperson, previously said some of the massive trunks

had been wrapped in fire-resistant foil for protection, but she corrected herself on Sunday and said that was not the case for this fire. However, crews have wrapped a historic cabin in the protective foil, she said. Lightning-sparked wildfires over the past two years have killed up to a fifth of the estimated 75,000 large sequoias, which are the biggest trees by volume and a major draw for tourists to the national park that's the size of the state of Rhode Island.

There was no obvious nat-

ural spark for the fire that broke out Thursday next to the park's Washburn Trail, Phillippe said.

Smoke was reported by visitors walking in the grove that reopened in 2018 after a \$40 million renovation that took three years. A fierce windstorm ripped through the grove over a year ago and toppled 15 giant sequoias, along with countless other trees.

The downed trees, along with massive numbers of pines killed by bark beetles, provided ample fuel for the flames. □

## Clotilda descendants mark anniversary of last slave ship

**MOBILE, Ala. (AP)** — Descendants of the last African people abducted into slavery and brought to America's shores gathered over the weekend on the banks of an Alabama river to pay tribute to their ancestors.

The descendants of the 110 people aboard the Clotilda, the last known slave ship to bring enslaved African people to the United States, held a ceremony to mark the anniversary of the vessel's arrival.

Dressed in white and walking slowly to the beat of an African drum,

the descendants made their way to the banks of the Mobile River near Alabama's coast. A wreath of white, yellow and red flowers was carried into the river by a kayaker and released into the waters.

In 1860, the Clotilda illegally transported 110 people from what is now the west African nation of Benin to Mobile, Alabama. The voyage happened decades after the law banning the importation of slaves had taken effect when a wealthy plantation owner made a bet he could smuggle a ship-

load of enslaved people across the ocean. "Today is the day that, 162 years ago, 110 enslaved Africans were brought to this country against their will for the purpose of satisfying a bet," said Darron Patterson, president of the Clotilda Descendants Association, told al.com. The discovery of the remnants of the Clotilda sparked renewed interest in its saga. But Patterson said the focus should be on the people it carried.

"The ship was pure evil. It was a vessel of evil. The real story was

the people inside that cargo hold. Very soon, we're going to stop talking about the ship as much as we talk about the people. Because the stories of the people are what matter," he told al.com.

The "landing" ceremony was held near the bridge to the Africatown community founded by Clotilda survivors after the Civil War.

"Proud of my heritage. I'd like to say even more so proud of the resilience and the legacy that they left behind," descendant Ronald Ellis Jr told FOX10. □



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## Anger simmers for Dutch farmers who oppose pollution cuts

By MIKE CORDER

Associated Press

MAASLAND, Netherlands

(AP) — Bales of hay lie burning along Dutch highways. Supermarket shelves stand empty because distribution centers are blocked by farmers. Then, at dusk, a police officer pulls his pistol and shoots at a tractor.

Dutch farmers are embroiled in a summer of discontent that shows no sign of abating. Their target? Government plans to rein in emissions of nitrogen oxide and ammonia that they say threatens to wreck their agricultural way of life and put them out of business.

The reduction targets could radically alter the Netherlands' lucrative agriculture sector, which is known for its intensive farming, and may also foreshadow similar reforms — and protests — in other European nations whose farmers also pump out pollutants. That turmoil seems a long way off Friday at Jaap Zegwaard's dairy farm, which occupies 80 hectares (200 acres) of grassland close to the port city of Rotterdam, whose chimneys and cranes form a backdrop to his fields.

Most of Zegwaard's herd of 180 cattle, mostly black and white Holstein-Friesians, graze in meadows close to a traditional Dutch windmill and large white wind turbines. And even if the farm has been in Zegwaard's family for five generations, some 200 years, he doesn't know if he would recommend the farming life to his a 7-year-old daughter and 3-year-old twin boys.

"If you ask me now, I'd say, please don't even think



Protesting farmers block a drawbridge at locks in the Princess Margriet canal, preventing all ship traffic from passing in Gaarkeuken, northern Netherlands, Monday, July 4, 2022.

Associated Press

about it," the 41-year-old said. "There are so many worries. Life's much too beautiful to deal with what's going on in the agriculture sector at the moment."

"Ask the average farmer: it's profoundly sad," he said.

At the heart of the clash between farmers and the Dutch government are moves to protect human health and vulnerable natural habitats from pollution in the form of nitrogen oxides and ammonia, which are produced by industry, transport and in the waste of livestock.

The Netherlands, a nation of 17.5 million people inhabiting an area a little larger than Maryland, has 1.57 million registered dairy cattle and just over 1 million calves being raised for meat, statistics show. The

country's farms produced exports worth 94.5 billion euros in 2019.

Nitrogen oxides and ammonia raise nutrient levels and acidity in the soil, leading to a reduction in biodiversity. Airborne nitrogen leads to smog and tiny particles that are damaging to people's health.

When the Council of State, the country's top administrative court and legislative advisory body, ruled in 2019 that Dutch policies to rein in nitrogen emissions were inadequate, it forced the government to consider tougher measures.

Unveiling a map detailing nitrogen reduction targets last month, the Dutch government called it an "unavoidable transition." It said the coming year would finally bring clarity for Dutch farmers, "whether and how they can continue with

their business. The minister sees three options for farmers: become (more) sustainable, relocate or stop."

The Dutch government aims to slash nitrogen emissions by 50% by 2030 and has earmarked an extra 24.3 billion euros (\$25.6 billion) to fund the changes. Provincial authorities have one year to draw up plans for achieving the reductions.

Nitrogen expert Wim de Vries, a professor at Wageningen University and Research, doubts that deadline is realistic.

"It seems to be very fast and there is a legacy, already for 40 years, because the problem was much bigger in the 1980s. We then called it 'acid rain,'" he said. "Considering that legacy, it doesn't make so much difference if we do it in 7 or 10 or 12

years. We anyhow have to wait for decades for nature to improve seriously."

Farmers have been protesting for years against the government's nitrogen policies, but the emissions targets unleashed new demonstrations, with tractors clogging highways and supermarket distribution centers that led briefly to some shortages of fresh produce. Farmers also clashed with police outside the home of the minister in charge of the government's nitrogen policies. And this week an officer opened fire on a tractor driven by a 16-year-old. After initially being held on suspicion of attempted manslaughter, the young driver was released without charge.

The Dutch government has appointed a veteran political negotiator to act as a middleman, but the gesture was immediately rejected by activist farmers and the nation's largest farming lobby group.

"The government does not offer any space to enter into a real conversation," said the farming lobby group LTO. "Under these conditions, speaking with the mediator is pointless."

The LTO, which represents about 30,000 farms — nearly a half of the Dutch total — described the nitrogen reduction target as "simply unfeasible." Dutch farms produced exports worth 94.5 billion euros in 2019.

The group says the government is focused on reducing livestock and buying up farms and not paying enough attention to innovation and sustainable farming practices. □

## Abe's killing haunts Japan with questions on handmade guns

By YURI KAGEYAMA

Associated Press

**TOKYO (AP)** — The shooting sent shudders through low-crime, orderly Japan: A high-profile politician gets killed by a man emerging from a crowd, wielding a handmade firearm so roughly made it's wrapped up in tape.

The 40-centimeter-long (16-inch) firearm that was used to kill former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe on Friday as he campaigned for his ruling party in Nara, western Japan, looked crude, more like a propellant made of pipes taped together and filled with explosives.

A raid of the suspect's home, a one-room apartment in Nara, turned up several such guns, police said. Unlike standard weapons, handmade guns are practically impossible to trace, making an investigation difficult.

Such weapons are rarely used in Japan, where most attacks involve stabbings or dousing a place with gasoline and setting it ablaze, or running haywire on the street in a vehicle.

Strict gun control laws likely made the suspect choose a handcrafted weapon. Tetsuya Yamagami, who was arrested on the spot, was a former member of Japan's navy, and knew how to handle and assem-



**Suspect Tetsuya Yamagami holds a weapon, as he is detained near the site of gunshots in Nara, western Japan, Friday, July 8, 2022.**

Associated Press

ble weapons.

Crime experts say instructions on how to make guns are floating around on the internet, and guns can be made with a 3D printer. Some analysts characterized the attack on Abe as "lone-wolf terrorism." In such cases, the perpetrator acts alone, often in sympathy with certain political views, making the crime very difficult to detect in advance.

The motive for Abe's assassination remains unclear. Japanese media reported that the suspect had devel-

oped hatred toward a religious group that his mother was obsessed about and that caused his family financial problems. The reports did not specify the group.

Japan has seen attacks on politicians in the past. In 1960, Abe's grandfather, then-Prime Minister Nobusuke Kishi, was stabbed but survived. In 1975, when then-Prime Minister Takeo Miki was assaulted at the funeral for former Prime Minister Eisaku Sato, Abe's great-uncle, Japan set up a security team modeled

after the American Secret Service.

Hideto Ted Osanai, chief executive at the International Bodyguard Association in Japan, and other experts believe that the Japanese may have merely learned superficial things like escort formation rather than the prevention mindset critical to security.

"Japanese are so used to leading peaceful lives, the security guards were caught asleep," says Yasuhiro Sasaki, president of Safety-Pro, a Tokyo-based security company. □

Sasaki said he couldn't believe that no one moved to protect Abe in the seconds between the first and the second shot, a scene shown over and over on national TV.

Guards should have acted by physically pulling Abe away from danger, Sasaki said. More critically, he wondered why weren't they aware of a suspicious person approaching, drawing what could be a weapon from a bag?

Isao Itabashi, chief of the research division at the Council for Public Policy, which oversees such risks, said that providing security during an election campaign was challenging when the whole point is for politicians to get close to people.

Unlike the U.S., the use of bulletproof glass is relatively scant in Japan, and security officials rarely resort to shooting potential attackers.

"The presumption here is that people are not armed," Itabashi said.

"Japan's conformist culture makes it difficult for some people to live freely, and they put great pressure on themselves. When they blame themselves, they turn to suicide. When they blame others, they turn to indiscriminate crimes," he said. □



**A woman weeps at the scene of an overnight bar shooting in Soweto, South Africa, Sunday July 10, 2022.**

Associated Press

By MOGOMOTSI MAGOME

Associated Press

**JOHANNESBURG (AP)** — A mass shooting at a tavern in Johannesburg's Soweto township has killed 15 people and left others in criti-

cal condition, according to police.

Police say they are investigating reports that a group of men arrived in a minibus taxi and opened fire on some of the patrons at the

## South Africa police say 15 killed in bar shooting in Soweto

bar shortly after midnight Sunday. The number of cartridges found on the scene indicates that a group of people opened fire in the bar, said Gauteng province police commissioner Lt. Gen. Elias Mawela.

"The primary investigation suggests that these people were enjoying themselves here, in a licensed tavern operating within the right hours," Mawela told The Associated Press.

"All of a sudden they heard some gunshots, that is when people tried to run out of the tavern. We don't have the full details at the moment of what is the motive,

and why they were targeting these people," he said. "You can see that a high caliber firearm was used and it was shooting randomly. You can see that every one of those people were struggling to get out of the tavern," Mawela told The Associated Press.

The area where the shooting took place was very dark, making it harder to find people who could identify the suspects, he said. Rifles and a 9 mm pistol were used in the attack, said national police spokeswoman Col. Dimakatso Sello.

In a separate incident, four

people were shot dead by unknown gunmen at a tavern in Sweetwaters township in the coastal city of Pietermaritzburg on Saturday night.

According to the police, two men entered the tavern and randomly opened fire on the patrons, killing two people on the scene while two others were confirmed dead at the hospital. Police said 8 other people are receiving treatment in a hospital. The deceased were aged between 30 and 45 and police are investigating charges of murder and attempted murder, police said. □



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## UNODC initiative regarding human trafficking for judiciary entities

**ORANJESTAD** – It is essential for the community to be aware of the difference between human trafficking and human smuggling. The first is a crime against the human rights of a person, and the second is a crime against a country or state. And for the National Coordinator against human trafficking, Jeanette Richardson Baars, it is crucial for the press to also understand the difference – which is big.

This was also the reason why the press was included in the information cycle on human trafficking which UNODC – United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime – held in Aruba. It regards the TRACK4TIP which stands for 'transforming alerts into criminal justice responses to combat trafficking in persons within migration flows'.

TRACK4TIP is a three-year initiative by UNODC with support of the Office for Monitoring and Combating Human Trafficking of the U.S. State Department. The project is directed to eight countries in South America

and the Caribbean, with regional and national actions. Curaçao and Aruba form part of this initiative. The general goal is to elevate the way in which Justice in the specific countries responds to human trafficking and the flow of migration.

Lourdes Gutiérrez from Panama and Lissette Reyes from the Dominican Republic are UNODC executives, who guide the presentations in collaboration with the Centre for Coordination on Human Trafficking and Smuggling, and HIAS, Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society which is also active in Aruba to provide support particularly to Venezuelan migrants and refugees.

Members of the Police Force, the intelligence unit in Human Trafficking (TIP), the investigative unit of TIP, the victim assistance office, the Department of Social Affairs, Interpol and the National Bureau of Counterterrorism all participate in the three day training, during which they did analysis and practical exercises based on real cases. As

such, the presentations were multidisciplinary, focused on the victim in order to identify, prevent and pursue cases of human trafficking.

To achieve this, TRACK4TIP proposed the implementation of seven main objectives organized under three specific goals which together make it easier for the countries to fortify the way in which their judicial entities respond in cases of human trafficking. It is focused on Venezuelans, who are the biggest migrant group in these countries, which also include Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, Brazil, Trinidad & Tobago, and the Dominican Republic.

Even though the presentation given to journalists was more general, the organizers felt that it is essential to understand the role of the press in this big problem, particularly the way in which the press deals with victims. This is because many times the victims are exposed in the press, without being aware of their trauma and vulnerability, while this can be an obstacle for them to help authorities pursue those trying to traffic them.

The life of a human trafficking victim, which is modern slavery, is in danger – for their freedom when they are forced to do work or acts against their human rights, and they also lack safety because they are in the hands of people who make sure they aren't safe in order to keep dominating them. And modern slavery is one of the most lucrative businesses currently. Next to drug and weapons trafficking, human trafficking is the biggest organized



crime, and often goes in combination with the other two, Reyes explained.

### Smuggling can become trafficking

Jeanette Baars Richardson says that one has to realize that there exists also the reality of undocumented migrants who pay to enter our country illegally. They partake in smuggling, and this is a crime against Aruba. Put there is a big danger that the people who use a smuggler can and do become victims of human trafficking, particularly because like the human trafficking business, there are more actors involved.

The knowledge that a person entered Aruba illegally can easily be used to force them to do work that can be qualified as abuse. For example make them go

work in construction without paying wages, without benefits and without rest. This is something that authorities noticed is taking place in Aruba, especially among male undocumented migrants. The danger for women and female teenagers is forced prostitution.

But another phenomenon which was noticed also in Aruba is how families start participating in the trafficking of youth, even children, to bring in money. Often they go into drug sales or prostitution. According to Baars-Richardson, poverty plays a big role. Aside from families victimizing their children, young people can also become a victim to others, through contacts on social media, where so-called 'groomers' can guide them to produce money through trafficking. □



## Exposition 'Tropico Cube' at Cas di Cultura

Oranjestad - Cas di Cultura presents the exhibition 'Tropico Cube', an exhibition featuring the local artist Laura de Vogel. This is the fifth and last exhibit that will be part of Cas di Cultura's program AUA Exhibits '21-'22, which is a series of exhibitions presenting

local visual arts curated by art historian Ana Maria Hernandez.

Laura de Vogel is a local artist that makes questions related to our understanding and relationship with the space around us. In her exhibition 'Tropico Cube',



de Vogel shares her artistic investigation about the functionality and identity of the 'White Cube' ideology. This is a format of exhibition of European/North American origin, which is a square white room, that offers a neutral space for the spectator can view art with no distraction.

This method of presenting art became the standard since 1930, however in re-

cent decades it became a topic of discussion because many argued it separates art from its reality.

In the 'Tropico Cube' exhibit, de Vogel offers a reflection of the search for a format to present art that is better tuned with our culture and heritage.

The exhibition 'Tropico Cube' will be open to the

public until the 27<sup>th</sup> of July at Cas di Cultura. Appointments can be made to receive a tour and learn more about visual art, taking the visitors to a different world.

For more information and to experience the exhibition you can contact Cas di Cultura at (297) 582-1010 or book an appointment at [info@casdicultura.aw](mailto:info@casdicultura.aw) □

**infini**  
by Urvin Croes

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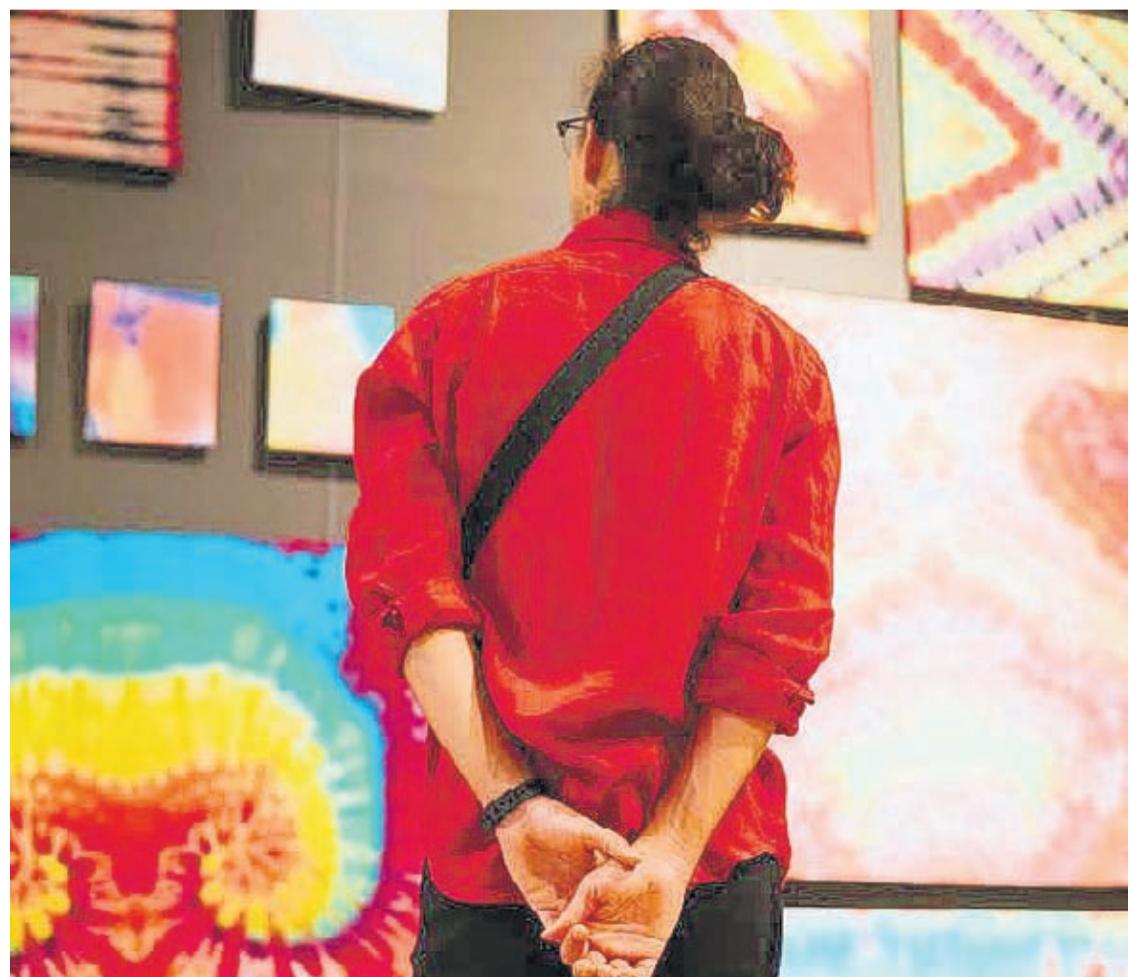
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## Family and friends wish a happy 40<sup>th</sup> year anniversary to Michael and Janet Ciurleo

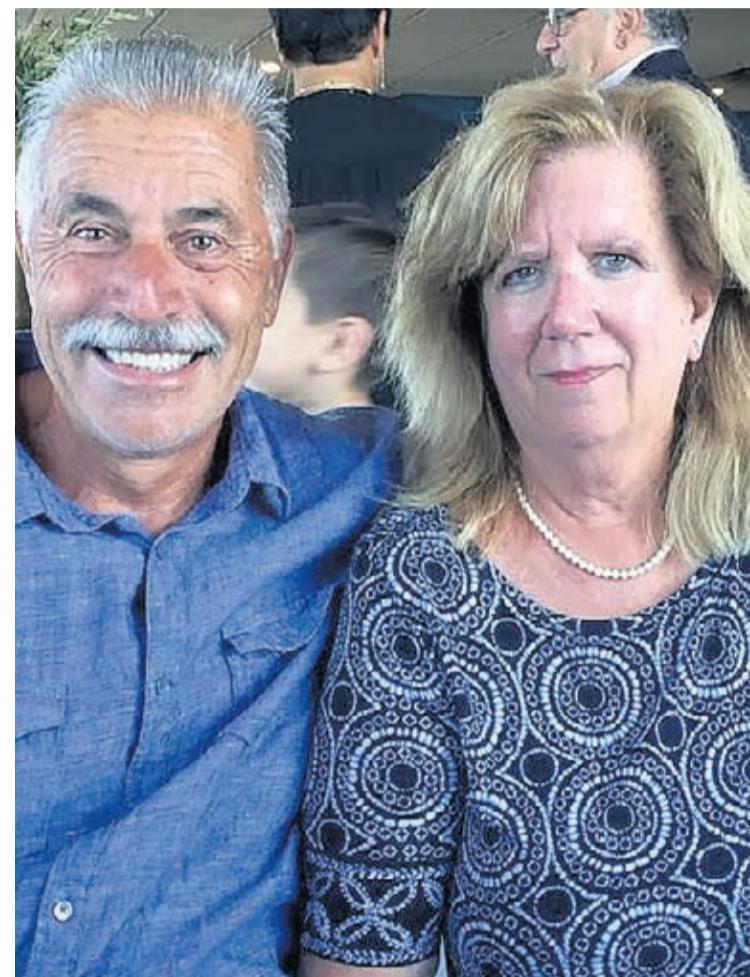
Oranjestad - Their daughter Heather reached out to us in order to highlight and celebrate the wonderful 40th year anniversary of her parents, who will be celebrating this beautiful and special occasion on our Island.

Michael and Janet Ciurleo are from New York and have two children, namely Heather, who is married to their son in law Stephan, and Michael, who has a girlfriend named Lindsey. They have two dogs named DJ & Cooper and a fur grandchild Ruby. They

have been owners at Divi Village & Golf since the year 2005, and have visited our Island 16 times, making this special trip their 17th.

The lovely couple will be celebrating the grand milestone in their marriage surrounded by the love of their family and friends, who send a special message to the couple; "We are so thankful to be celebrating your 40th anniversary in Aruba!"

Along with their loved ones, Aruba Today wishes them many more years filled with love, strength and unity in their marriage. We hope you have a wonderful time celebrating this beautiful special day.□



## Aruba to Me



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## Over a decade in business, Aruba Living Today: Offering the so much needed human touch

NOORD — We are in 2022. It's been a wild ride with Covid-19 and we all are aiming for a change of routine. We simply want to "live" life again. "It is time for living your dream," as the quote says at Aruba Living Today's office. "We are ten plus years in business, and I am proud to say that all our clients stuck with us. We are no part of a big company, we keep it small, personal, and real. Because you are not a number, no sales target either and certainly your name is not commission. Our responsibility is to make your dream come true," says owner Randolph Arrends.

### From human to human

If you have decided to buy a house or rent one for vacation in Aruba and you are looking for that match, the question now is how to click with a person that offers a personal touch? One who pays genuine attention and has sincere interest in what you want? This different approach to real estate is what sets Aruba Living Today apart, and the reason Randolph calls himself a property mediator instead of a real estate broker. "The personal touch is essential to me. I am stepping aside of the image that real estate brokers are only in for the commission. This image does not fit me at all, I am in for my passion, and I can only do this from the heart."



### One stop shopping point

Services offered by Aruba Living Today are House and Land Sales, Rentals, Investments, Property Management, Vacation Rental, Mortgages, Insurances, Maintenance, Assist in Arrangements

for Notary and Utilities, Guiding Bureaucracy Process and Assisting in Import of Furniture. Randolph and his business partner Berend Prenger are a fantastic, experienced duo, each of them specialists in the field. Berend is

also a certified appraiser within the Dutch Kingdom meaning he does your appraisal report that is accepted by all banks and he delivers within three days. "This definitely speeds up the process of buying," Prenger adds.

### You are welcome to meet in person

Aruba Living Today houses in an authentic Aruban house, welcoming you in a warm ambiance that emphasizes the philosophy of connecting. Candles, Buddha ornaments and a homey setting form the décor for you to sit and talk about your dream house or investment. "My goal was to do real estate in a different way when I established this company June 1st 2009. Not from the perspective of only selling, but to look for the perfect match between dream house and client. My philosophy is: it will only work when all involved are happy and connected by that personal touch."

Aruba Living Today caters for both local and foreign market divided into 40 % local buyers and 60 % foreign buyers. "Our customers come from Holland, Belgium, Norway, Germany, UK, Russia, Latin America, United States and Canada. We are widely covered and thus provable good with different cultures, also we speak four languages." Besides that, Aruba Living Today is open to every budget, they have listings for all category buyers. As a member of the Aruban Real Estate Association, they are listed also on the website [www.arubalisting.com](http://www.arubalisting.com) within a group of 20 of the most advanced realtors on the island. Aruba Living Today is featured on House Hunters, social media, Aruba Living Today and of course in Aruba Today's newspaper. □

### Aruba Living Today

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Mail [randolph@livingtoday.aw](mailto:randolph@livingtoday.aw)



## Edward Silberie, a producer and director supporting local artists

Edward Silberie, better known as 'Aidi', is a 33 year old man who started his music career from a young age. In an interview with our reporter, Edward told us about his music career, his transition to music video director, and the projects he has for the future.

Edward started practicing music when he was only 6 years old, when his dad signed him up for piano lessons. While he was taking piano lessons, Mr. Robert Thiel was also playing piano at the restaurant owned by Edward's family, and it was there where he started experimenting with different types of music on piano, under the guidance of Thiel.

He says that he was part of the group of gaita – traditional Christmas-time music in Aruba – Ritmo y Mas, where he was playing the piano. During that time, Edward started recording his own songs. "During that time I started learning to record by myself at home. I started making rhythms by myself at home with a computer that I had, and Robert Thiel started giving me the programs to record, compose and arrange."

Edward says that during that same time he had a friend who used to come to him to record every afternoon after school, and this



is how he learned to make beats, how to record, and from there he expanded and continued exploring. He started recording with various local artists on the island, among others, Jonathan Thiel, and from there his music career started.

After about four years that he spent recording for local artists in Aruba, Edward decided to take his passion more seriously and went to study music at Full Sail University.

"My intention was always to record in a big studio in the United States. You know you always have that dream from a young age, of wanting to be behind the console, record with big artists. And after a finished school, Penn Foster in



Aruba, y started EPI Hospitality and Tourism. But when I realized I had the opportunity to do what I really like, I stopped attending EPI and went to Full Sail", Edward says.

He explains that at Full Sail he took advantage of the opportunity and connected with a lot of people, with

the producers who were there, the department of videography, and there he realized that there is a lot more that can be done in the world of music. "It was there that my mind started going, 'wow, there's so much more that you can do'. Not only recording artists, but you can make movies, video games, you can work in television. So it was there that my mind expanded."

When Edward came back to Aruba, he continued recording music with different local artists, and together with local sensation Jeon, he was traveling a lot to Venezuela to record video. During one of these trips, he realized that being a music video director was also something he could do.

"During the recording of one video, the director was there but I was giving ideas and instructions for various things that could be done during the recording. From there to a few more videos,

I was basically planning the whole project. First I was doing it for fun because I didn't know what being a director meant, but I was putting everything together. And after that, with a project I managed to buy all my equipment, and I started recording videos for Jeon", Edward says.

In this trajectory, Edward says he started experimenting; he started learning more and exploring in the world of music video. At the beginning he didn't see it as something he would dedicate himself to do, and it started with a game, but he took it seriously and currently he records videos with international artists. Every day he grows more in the world of music video.

Last October, Jeon launched a new album, titled Santa Cruz. Edward says that on the album there are different collaborations with local artists and with international producers. Each song in the album has the name of a town in Aruba, where the focus is on the rhythm of the songs that people in those specific areas listen to.

"This project is really 'crioyo' [red: authentic local]. The cover was made by a person who knows the culture of Aruba, we didn't choose to work with international designers, we chose a person from Aruba who knows Aruban culture, it is really a crioyo project", he explains.

On this album, Edward himself has two songs that he produced, and together with a producer from the Netherlands MB, who also made the song.

Since 2017 Edward has his own company, Re-clight Production. Edward worked with international artists, like Jeon, Lumino, Malu, Odilia, Snoop Dogg, Carlos Arroyo, Joey Montana, Irsais and Joe Veras, among others. His vision is to work and support local artists. □



## CROSSWORD

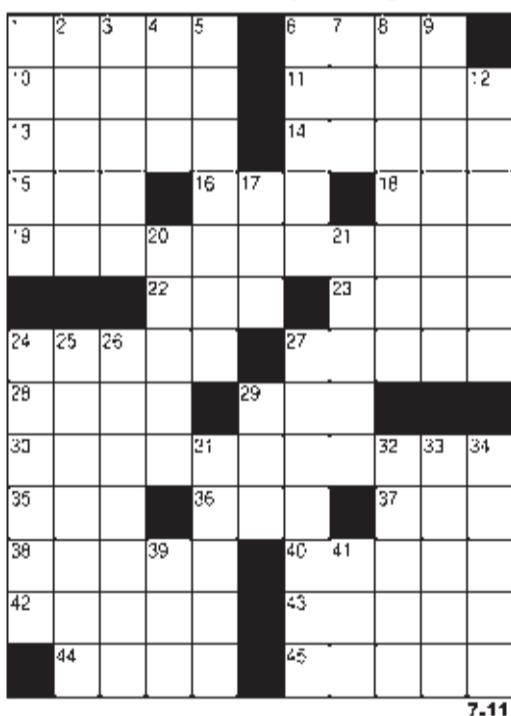
By THOMAS JOSEPH

**ACROSS**

- 1 Felt leather concern
- 6 Title paper
- 10 Find darling
- 11 "The King"
- 13 Prepare for another war
- 14 Owen of "Inside Man"
- 15 Ancient
- 16 Lupino of film
- 18 Ho of Hawaii
- 19 Popular reads
- 22 Game official
- 23 In the past
- 24 Joke teller
- 27 Memory units
- 28 Leave out
- 29 Carib-bean, for one
- 30 Spots for bottles
- 35 Conclude
- 36 Skirt edge
- 37 Trip around the track
- 38 TV's O'Donnell
- 40 Skate-boarding jump



Saturday's answer



AXYDLBAAXR  
is LONG FELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

7-11

## CRYPTOQUOTE

C B Q O I L F I K P N G C H B  
"VLFQZKH." IGOH C WCQVP  
SOKQHOR PD RCUO. C IKVH'P  
RCUCHB: C IKV WSECHB.  
SCXO VLFOQZKH. — PDZ  
GCRRSOVPDH

Saturday's Cryptoquote: A KITTEN IS IN THE ANIMAL WORLD WHAT A ROSEBUD IS IN THE GARDEN. — ROBERT SOUTHEY



Retired Houston Fire Captain Russell Harris poses for a photograph inside his workshop at his home Wednesday, June 22, 2022, in East Bernard, Texas.

Associated Press

## Crypto plunge is cautionary tale for public pension funds

By STEVE KARNOWSKI

Associated Press

**MINNEAPOLIS (AP)** — When the Houston Firefighters Relief and Retirement Fund bought \$25 million in cryptocurrencies, with the fund's chief investment officer touting their potential, retired fire Capt. Russell Harris was concerned. Harris, 62, has attended the funerals of 34 firefighters killed in the line of duty. He was already worried about his pension after an overhaul by state and city officials cut payments as they grappled with the ability to pay out benefits. He didn't see crypto, unproven in his eyes, as an answer.

"I don't like it," Harris said. "There's too many pyramid schemes that everybody gets wrapped up in. That's the way I see this cryptocurrency at this time. ... There might be a place for it, but it's still new and nobody understands it."

The plunge in prices for Bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies in recent weeks provides a cautionary tale for the handful of public pension funds that have invested in crypto. "There may come a day when crypto settles down and becomes adequately understood and mature as a potential investment that public pension funds might embrace them," Brainard said. "I'm just not sure that we're there yet."

cult to tell whether they've made or lost money, let alone how much, and for the most part fund officials won't say.

But the recent crypto meltdown has prompted a larger question: For pension funds that ensure teachers, firefighters, police and other public workers receive guaranteed benefits in retirement after public service, is any amount of crypto investment too risky?

Many public pension funds across the U.S. are underfunded, sometimes seriously so, which leads them to take risks to try to catch up. That doesn't always work out, and the risk extends not just to the funds but to taxpayers who might have to bail them out, either through higher taxes or diverting spending away from other needs.

Keith Brainard, research director for the National Association of State Retirement Administrators, said he wasn't aware of more than a handful of public pension funds that have invested in crypto.

The U.S. Department of Labor urges "extreme care" in crypto investments because of the high risks. The recent plunge in crypto prices has caused Washington to more closely scrutinize the freewheeling industry. After the collapse of \$40 billion crypto asset known as Terra, senators in both parties have proposed legislation that would regulate crypto for the first time, and Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen has called for more oversight of crypto ventures.

It's not clear how that panned out in the cryptocurrency market slide this year. Officials from fund and the union didn't respond to multiple requests for comment. But the fund bought in when bitcoin prices were close to their peak of nearly \$67,000, and they've been on the decline since then, dipping below \$20,000 in June.

The fund's chairman, Brett Besselman, said in a first-quarter report that it was healthy with an overall rate of return of 33.7% in 2021. Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner said earlier this year that the 2017 overhaul is working well and, thanks to strong returns in 2021, has put his city's pension funds well ahead of schedule toward eliminating their unfunded liabilities. □

## Report: Uber lobbied, used 'stealth' tech to block scrutiny

The Associated Press

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — As Uber aggressively pushed into markets around the world, the ride-sharing service lobbied political leaders to relax labor and taxi laws, used a "kill switch" to thwart regulators and law enforcement, channeled money through Bermuda and other tax havens and considered portraying violence against its drivers as a way to gain public sympathy, according to a report released Sunday.

The International Consortium of Investigative Journalists, a nonprofit network of investigative reporters, scoured internal Uber texts, emails, invoices and other documents to deliver what it called "an unprecedented look into the ways Uber defied taxi laws and upended workers' rights."

The documents were first leaked to the British newspaper The Guardian, which shared them with the consortium.

In a written statement, Uber spokesperson Jill Hazel-

baker acknowledged "mistakes" in the past and said CEO Dara Khosrowshahi, hired in 2017, had been "tasked with transforming every aspect of how Uber operates ... When we say Uber is a different company today, we mean it literally: 90% of current Uber employees joined after Dara became CEO."

Founded in 2009, Uber sought to skirt taxi regulations and offer inexpensive transportation via a ride-sharing app. The consortium's Uber Files revealed the extraordinary lengths that the company undertook to establish itself in nearly 30 countries.

The company's lobbyists — including former aides to President Barack Obama — pressed government officials to drop their investigations, rewrite labor and taxi laws and relax background checks on drivers, the papers show.

The investigation found that Uber used "stealth technology" to fend off government investigations. The

company, for example, used a "kill switch" that cut access to Uber servers and blocked authorities from grabbing evidence during raids in at least six countries. During a police raid in Amsterdam, the Uber Files reported, former Uber CEO Travis Kalanick personally issued an order: "Please hit the kill switch ASAP ... Access must be shut down in AMS (Amsterdam)."

The consortium also reported that Kalanick saw the threat of violence against Uber drivers in France by aggrieved taxi drivers as a way to gain public support. "Violence guarantee(s) success," Kalanick texted colleagues.

In a response to the consortium, Kalanick spokes-

man Devon Spurgeon said the former CEO "never suggested that Uber should take advantage of violence at the expense of driver safety."

The Uber Files say the company cut its tax bill by millions of dollars by sending profits through Bermuda and other tax havens, then "sought to deflect attention from its tax liabilities by helping authorities collect taxes from its drivers." □

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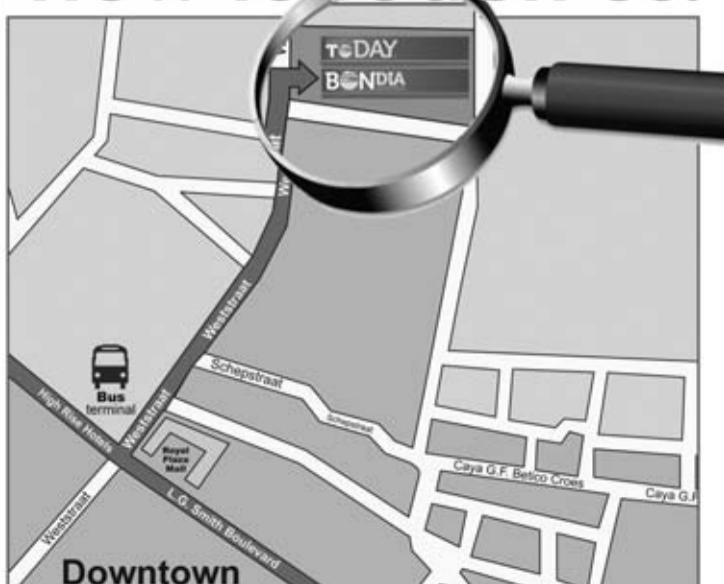
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## Greinke pitches 5 scoreless innings, Royals beat Guardians

BY CODY FRIESEN

Associated Press

**KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP)** — Zack Greinke pitched five scoreless innings of three-hit ball and the Kansas City Royals slowed the Cleveland Guardians 5-1 on Sunday.

A day after the Guardians got a season-high 23 hits in a 13-1 romp, Greinke (3-5) and four relievers combined on a five-hitter.

"You never know how a team will respond, but to watch this team, the guys just come back and play really hard," Royals manager Mike Matheny said. "I thought they did a real nice job all the way around today and Zack set the tone for us and his stuff was really sharp. He put everything where he wanted to today."

Greinke struck out five and walked one in his 222nd career win.

"I think (Greinke) kind of out-veteranized us," Guardians manager Terry Francona said. "He started by expanding with that breaking ball down and then got into the game and got his rhythm down with everything and just spun it off his fastball."

In the third inning, Greinke threw his 50,000th total pitch in the majors. Now in his 19th season, the 38-year-old righty became the 17th



Kansas City Royals starting pitcher Zack Greinke throws during the first inning of a baseball game against the Cleveland Guardians Sunday, July 10, 2022, in Kansas City, Mo.

Associated Press

pitcher to reach that feat since 1988, when pitch count data became available. Justin Verlander is the only other active player to reach the mark.

"It is pretty neat," Greinke said. "I don't really pay attention to many of those, but it sounds like a high number. The 500 career starts were more interesting to me but it was pretty cool."

Said Matheny: "I don't think I've ever heard a stat on how many pitches a pitcher has thrown."

"That's a lot and I guaran-

tee that'll be his answer but I love watching this guy pitch. What he's doing in our clubhouse and how he competes in the high-level expectation he has for himself is almost unrealistic, but that's part of what makes him so great," he said.

MJ Melendez drove in two runs and Andrew Benintendi extended his on-base streak to an AL-best 19 games. Benintendi hit an RBI single in the fifth and Melendez had a two-run single later in the inning. Kyle Isbel and Nicky Lopez also had RBI singles for the

Royals.

Zach Plesac (2-6) gave up three earned runs and six hits in five innings. He began the game with a 6-0 record against the Royals in 11 career appearances. "It was frustrating," Plesac said. "You feel like you're in control the whole inning and then things start happening and unraveling and you just want to continue to execute in those moments."

"When you get a chance to get out of there you just got to execute pitches. This was a big game, series tied,

rubber match and we had to bring the energy today and this was a game to win so, yeah, it hurts," he said.

Owen Miller recorded the lone extra-base hit for Cleveland and scored on a wild pitch in the ninth.

The win snapped a streak of six straight rubber-game losses at home for Kansas City dating to last Sept. 5.

### TRAINER'S ROOM

Royals: 2B Whit Merrifield was removed from the game at the start of the fifth inning with right toe discomfort. Merrifield holds the longest active games played streak in the majors with 553.

"I didn't even see it, but I guess as he broke towards the line on a ball he pushed off and felt something and came back in," Matheny said. "His X-ray came back negative, but he's getting an MRI today."

### ROSTER MOVES

Royals: RHP Jonathan Heasley (right shoulder tendinitis) was placed on the 15-day injured list and LHP Foster Griffin was recalled from Triple-A Omaha in the corresponding move.

### UP NEXT

Guardians: RHP Cal Quantrill (4-5, 3.86 ERA) will open Cleveland's eight-game homestand against AL Central foes, starting with a four-gamer against the Chicago White Sox. □



Stage winner Bob Jungels of Luxembourg rides breakaway during the ninth stage of the Tour de France cycling race over 193 kilometers (119.9 miles) with start in Aigle, Switzerland and finish in Châtel les Portes du Soleil, France, Sunday, July 10, 2022.

Associated Press

**CHÂTEL LES PORTES DU SOLEIL, France (AP)** — A solo attack by Bob Jungels gave him his first Tour de France stage victory

on the first Alpine finish of this year's race, while two-time defending champion Tadej Pogačar retained the leader's yellow jersey

## Jungels takes 1st career Tour stage win, Pogačar keeps lead

after the ninth stage on Sunday.

The 29-year-old Jungels, who rides for the AG2R Citroën Team, set off on his own with almost 65 kilometers (40 miles) remaining of the mountainous 193-kilometer (120-mile) route from Aigle in Switzerland to the ski resort of Châtel les Portes du Soleil.

The Luxembourg native had time to sit up and stretch out his arms before punching the air in delight as he crossed the line 22 seconds ahead of Jonathan Castroviejo and 26 ahead of Carlos Verona.

The victory crowns a comeback for Jungels following a year to forget. He struggled with back problems and then a head injury suffered in a crash at the beginning of last season and then missed the Tour and the Summer Olympics after undergoing surgery.

"It's hard to say what I feel right now. I'm just overwhelmed to be honest. This is huge, this is what I came here for," Jungels said. "After a couple of years struggling, a very tough last year with surgeries and everything, also to take the victory this way,

it's my style of racing, my style of taking the victory."

"So I'm super happy, I saw the shape was getting better day by day but to do something like this... I knew I had to try it from far because on the last climb it wasn't possible to ride away from the favorites."

Pogačar and Jonas Vingegaard sprinted to the line to gain three seconds over their rivals for the overall lead. The Slovenian remained 39 seconds ahead of Vingegaard but increased his advantage to 1:17 over 2018 winner Geraint Thomas. □

## Novak Djokovic beats Nick Kyrgios for 7th Wimbledon title

By HOWARD FENDRICH

AP Tennis Writer

WIMBLEDON, England (AP)

— Novak Djokovic waited. He waited for Nick Kyrgios to lose focus and lose his way. Waited to find the proper read on his foe's big serves. Waited until his own level rose to the occasion. Djokovic is not bothered by a deficit — in a game, a set, a match. He does not mind problem-solving. And at Wimbledon, for quite some time now, he does not get defeated.

Djokovic used his steady brilliance to beat the ace-delivering, trick-shot-hitting, constantly chattering Kyrgios 4-6, 6-3, 6-4, 7-6 (3) on Sunday for a fourth consecutive Wimbledon championship and seventh overall.

The top-seeded Djokovic ran his unbeaten run at the grass-court Grand Slam tournament to 28 matches and raised his career haul to 21 major trophies, breaking a tie with Roger Federer and moving just one behind Rafael Nadal's 22 for the most in the history of men's tennis.

Among men, only Federer, with eight, has won more titles at Wimbledon than Djokovic. In the professional era, only Federer was older (by less than a year) than the 35-year-old Djokovic when winning at the All England Club.

This comeback on a sun-filled afternoon followed those in the quarterfinals, when Djokovic erased a two-set deficit against No. 10 seed Jannik Sinner, and in the semifinals, when No. 9 Cam Norrie grabbed the opening set. In last year's title match at Wimbledon, Djokovic dropped the opening set. In the 2019 final, he erased two championship points against Federer.

There were two particularly key moments Sunday, ones that Kyrgios would not let go as he began engaging in running monologues, shouting at himself or his entourage (which does not include a full-time coach), earning a warning for cursing, finding reason to disagree with the chair

umpire he fist-bumped before the match, and chucking a water bottle.

In the second set, with Djokovic serving at 5-3, Kyrgios got to love-40 — a trio of break points. But Kyrgios played a couple of casual returns, and Djokovic eventually held.

When that set ended, Kyrgios waved dismissively toward his box, sat down and dropped his racket to the turf, then groused, to no one in particular: "It was love-40! Can it get any bigger or what?! Is that big enough for you?!"

And then, in the third set, with Kyrgios serving at 4-all, 40-love, he again let a seemingly sealed game get away, with Djokovic breaking there.

The 40th-ranked Kyrgios

was trying to become the first unseeded men's champion at Wimbledon since Goran Ivanisevic in 2001. Ivanisevic is now Djokovic's coach and was in the Centre Court guest box for the match.

Kyrgios, the 27-year-old Australian, had never had been past the quarterfinals in 29 previous Grand Slam appearances — and the last time he made it even that far was 7 1/2 years ago. In some ways, he stole the show Sunday. He tried shots between his legs, hit some with his back to the net, pounded serves at up to 136 mph and produced 30 aces. He used an under-arm serve, then faked one later.

For all of the significant records and other factoids



Serbia's Novak Djokovic celebrates beating Australia's Nick Kyrgios in the final of the men's singles on day fourteen of the Wimbledon tennis championships in London, Sunday, July 10, 2022.

Associated Press

logged in the 560-page Wimbledon Compendium — including categories such as "ambidextrous players" or "runners-up who

wore glasses in a final" — no mention is made of "under-arm serves in a gentleman's final," but it seems safe to say that was a first. □

Everyday triple points      Totally sanitized table and chips.

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An advertisement for Orchid Casino. It features a black background with gold coins floating on the left. The text "Everyday triple points" and "Totally sanitized table and chips." are at the top. The main text "ORCHID CASINO" is in large gold letters, followed by "Located in the Riu Antillas (formerly the Westin)" and "welcomes you to RESERVE YOUR OWN PRIVATE TABLE for you and your party." Below this is a logo with a pink orchid. The bottom half shows a black and white photograph of a blackjack table with several people playing. A white box contains the reservation information. The text "Orchid Casino" is written in a stylized font above the table.



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From the minute you arrive there will be a great staff welcoming you with the most contagious smiles and warmth. The intense menu with a great variety of appetizers, main courses and delicious desserts will not disappoint. Seafood, Steaks and international favorites. All on one menu specially made just for you.

### Culinary Voyage

Start your gastronomic journey with a scrumptious appetizer such as the Maryland Crab Cakes, maybe the Crispy Calamari or the mouthwatering

creamy Garlic Tarragon Shrimp. You can also opt for a classic French Onion Soup, a Lobster Bisque or the famously Water's Edge House Wedge, a crisp wedge of fresh romaine lettuce topped with homemade blue cheese dressing, diced tomatoes, chopped bacon, caramelized pecans and blue cheese crumbles, drizzled with balsamic reduction. This followed by the Chef's special of seafood such as Fresh salmon filet seasoned and grilled, topped with lemon cilantro butter and served with homemade mashed potatoes and fresh asparagus, a nice plate of Ahi Tuna or a succulent pasta dish like the Florentina Fettuccine Alfredo. Meat Lovers will have their fix with choices of a devourable 22oz. Bone-In "Tomahawk" Rib-Eye, pan seared in garlic infused oil and finished in the oven or our juicy N.Y Strip Loin, seasoned & grilled. All our steaks options are seasoned with a blend of kosher salt and freshly cracked black pepper. Served with homemade mashed potatoes, seasoned vegetables and a choice of red wine reduction, green peppercorn demi glace, mushroom sauce, or bacon blue cheese butter. For extra sides the options are delectable. Fresh asparagus, seasonal vegetables, mashed or baked potatoes, fries or rice and beans. Combine

your personal choice with one of the most exclusive wine from the great selection of international wines to compliment your dish. Kids will enjoy every item of the specially compiled kids menu and there are also optional dishes for all vegans, vegetarians and gluten-free guests. To end the culinary voyage with some luscious sweetness, the desserts are wild. From a piece of coconut flan, NY cheese cake, carrot cake, chocolate brownie or our classic Tiramisu with kahlua and amaretto served with chocolate sauce and coffee jelly. Not to mention the fresh and light piece of key lime pie.

### Creating memories

If you are planning a birthday dinner, here you will receive a nice bottle of champagne to take home with you to extend your experience even further whether on the beach or your own private balcony.

### Live entertainment

Just about every day of the week, there is a different live entertainment by the best local artists for you to enjoy. Whether you're in a romantic mood, or more in a swinging mood, there is absolutely a night especially for you where you can combine great music with delicious cocktails mixed with concoctions. In addition, Water's Edge offers three daily Happy Hours from 12pm-1pm, 4pm-6pm and again from 9pm-10pm with all premium brands specially priced.

### Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

Whether you join us for breakfast, lunch or dinner, Water's Edge Restaurant & Bar offers a relaxed and inspirational dining experience overlooking the beautiful Eagle Beach with spectacular ocean views. Gather with friends and family for drinks and appetizers or a night of pampering and relaxation.



### Thank you to all our guests

From the bottom of our hearts, we would like to Thank all of our guests who showed us so much love and support all through 2021, and hopefully will continue to do so in 2022. What we are most grateful for is that we could get back to doing what we love, which is looking after our guests. So, thank you for every dinner, lunch, breakfast, very to-go order, every glass of wine, every birthday, anniversary and date-night that you spent with us this last year. To our new guests, Welcome! We hope you to see you back soon! □

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